Preaching: Principles and Practice  
in Preparing Relevant and Biblical Sermons PR 601  
and  
Introduction to Preaching PR 500  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Boston Campus  
Syllabus Fall 2012

Sept. 8 & 22; Oct. 13 & 27; Nov. 3

Dr. Matthew L. Burt, Professor  
Phone: 413-219-5371  
Class Schedule 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.  
Progressive Community Baptist Church  
599 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01109  
Church Phone 413-736-8844

Course Description

PR 601
This course is designed to enable the student to construct an expository sermon based upon the skills of exegesis. In addition, students will gain experience explaining a biblical passage and delivering a biblical sermon without notes. A year of a Biblical language and/or NT 502 Interpreting the New Testament are prerequisites for the course.

PR 500
This course is designed to enhance the preacher who has had little or no formal theological training. Students will gain a basic background of the history and theology of preaching, including the role of great preachers in shaping the history of the church. In addition, students will be exposed to rudimentary exegetical methods as it contributes to the homiletical task.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Mission

PR 601 and PR 500 relate to the mission of Gordon-Conwell by equipping the student to think biblically about the purpose of expository preaching. The literal, grammatical, historical and practical interpretation of the text with its application into the modern day congregant’s life is essential for the development of mature followers of Christ. This course seeks to help students acquire the requisite knowledge, skills, and develop the spiritual attitudes needed to become fully equipped, prepared, and skilled for ministry within the Church.

Course Relationship to the Curriculum
This course is an introduction to the principles of preparing relevant biblical sermons. Lectures and exercises cover a stage-by-stage explanation of how preachers think as they prepare to preach. The aim of the course is to help students understand what is required to preach effectively and to practice what they understand. Practice sessions provide opportunity for students to preach with critique by the professor.

**Course Objectives**

As a result of this course students should be able to deliver a sermon derived from the Biblical text without the use of notes. In order to accomplish this, the student will:

(A) Have a basic procedure that moves one from the biblical text to a sermon based on that text.

(B) Give an explanation of the meaning of a specific segment of scripture (or theological concept within that segment); be able to explain how a passage fits into its wider Biblical context; and the implications of a particular text for theology or action. This will be measured by an exercise in class.

(C) Develop skill in constructing a clear outline consisting of full, declarative sentences that relate to a basic idea. The outline should also show transitions in parentheses between the major points and if necessary the supporting points. This will be measured by handing in an outline of the explanation exercise and the final sermon for grading.

(D) Have a working definition of expository preaching.

(E) Understand the basic elements in sermon construction and what they should accomplish -- introduction, Big (central) Idea (based on the exegetical idea of the passage), transitions, illustrations, development of the sermon, and conclusion.

(F) Begin to develop a skill in writing a sermon manuscript geared to the way audiences listen.

(G) Seek to understand how to depend upon and invite the Holy Spirit to be a part of the act of preaching.

(H) Listen to five [5] recorded sermons and seek to evaluate them with the view of determining what makes an effective sermon.

**Course Requirements**

1. Attendance at all class meetings.
2. All Required Reading
3. Reading Reflection Papers
4. Explanation Exercise
5. Preaching a sermon
6. Listening to five recorded sermons
Course Textbooks

The Acts of the Apostles, Holy Bible

ISBN 978-0-8010-2262
Price Range $9.50 (used) -- $22.00. Kindle Available

$5.00--$10.00. Kindle Available

Price Range $7.00-- $8.00

ISBN 978-0801065040
Price Range $5.00 (used) -- $14.00

Stott, John R. W., Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982) 335 pages
Price Range $1.25 (used) -- $24.00. Kindle Available

OR

ISBN 978-03-1033-1292
Price Range $ 11.00 -- $23.00. Kindle Available

NOTE:
If Stott, Between Two Worlds is chosen the student is also required to read Chapters 1-3 from Lloyd-Jones, Preaching & Preachers. (Copies available for purchase from Professor or on reserve at CUME Library.)

If Lloyd-Jones, Preaching & Preachers is chosen the student is also required to read Chapter 2 in Stott, Between Two Worlds. (Copies available for purchase from Professor or on reserve at CUME Library.)
Additional Text for PR 500 Students

ISBN 978-0-310-27951-8
Price Range $19.00- $35.00 Kindle Available

OR

ISBN 978-0830837236
Price Range $9.00 - $15.00 Kindle Available

John Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, Chapter 1

Course Assignments

Please Note: All written work (unless otherwise specified will be presented according to Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), double spaced, one-sided, using 12 point font in either Times New Roman or Cambria.

1. Before Class: *Why Johnny Can’t Preach* see details below, September 8, 2012

2. Read the entire book of the Acts of the Apostles giving special attention to sermons, descriptions of preaching and the vocabulary that us used to described apostolic preaching. This is an exercise for your own awareness.
There is not written work attached to it.

3. Reading Reflection papers. For Stott, Lloyd-Jones, Martin, and Piper. For each book write a paper (Three pages, singed spaced, 12 point font, maximum) considering and answering these questions:
   a. Is there a central idea in this book—what is it?
   b. Summarize the overall thrust of the authors argument
   c. What in this book is a new concept to you? (there might be more than one!)
   d. Do you disagree with the author in any areas? Counter his argument with your own thoughts.
   e. What is the most important idea in this book?

4. You will listen to a minimum of five sermons from one preacher (this is your own choice). For each sermon prepare an evaluation that answers theses questions. If after listening to two (2) sermons you feel the need to change preachers please feel free to do so. This exercise is meant to help you get the feel for a particular preacher and to evaluate his/her style on the basis of class material.
a. Please state it and analyze and comment on it.
b. When through with the introduction, did you want the preacher to go
   on? Y/N Did it capture interest so that you would want him/her to
   continue? Y/N How did he/she do? Analyze and comment.
c. Did he/she illustrate? Y/N If so, what did he/she do? — to explain,
   prove or apply? Did he/she succeed? Y/N Why or why not? Analyze
   and comment. You must provide specific examples of how the
   preacher explained, What do you think is the main idea or concept the
   preacher was trying to get across? proved, or applied the text.
d. Do you think the conclusion drove home the main idea of the sermon
   in a way that caused you to want to respond? Analyze and comment.
e. What do you think that you as a listener might do, think or change as a
   result of hearing the sermon?
f. Do you think the delivery helped or hindered the presentation?
g. Did the sermon accurately deal with the text of Scripture?
h. What were its strengths? What about weaknesses? Analyze and
   comment.

5. Prepare an **outline** for the explanation exercise.
6. Prepare a **manuscript** for the explanation exercise. You will explain a passage
   of scripture (or a specific aspect, term or theological concept) so that the
   audience understands it. This be no less than six (6) minutes and no longer
   than ten (10) minutes. You will be encouraged to make this presentation
   **without notes**. Note this is to be done in lecture format, this is not a sermon or
   an exhortation.

7. Prepare a manuscript and an outline for a complete sermon that both
   explains and applies to the passage. This sermon will be preached without
   notes and will be no longer than fifteen (15) minutes in length. Both the
   outline and the manuscript will be due the day you preach.
8. You will take notes for evaluation on your classmates’ sermons as they are
   preached in class and be prepared to enter into class discussion with the
   professor following the sermon.
9. You will write and evaluation of your own sermon and preaching experience
   stating:
      a. Your emotions/feelings as you preached
      b. what you think you did well, and
      c. where you would like to improve in your next sermon.

**WARNING ON PLAGIARISM**
Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found on the Indiana University website
listed below. This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell
faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare your
papers/exams. In order to save paper, we’ve provided you with the website address:
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html. Please consider this carefully.
If you have questions please ask!
Grading

The full 100% of this class grade assumes 100% class attendance and 100% of the required reading. Lack of class attendance or required reading will affect final grade. Missed classes will result in a deduction of 1% for each section of class missed (a section is calculated on a 1.5 hour block of in class work). Uncompleted reading will result in a deduction equivalent to the percentage of unfinished reading to the whole assignments.

Reading Reports
(Including pre-class Gordon assignment) Five reports @ 5% each = 25%
Sermon Evaluations 10%
Explanation Exercise Outline 5%
Explanation Exercise 20%
Sermon (Outline, Manuscript and Preaching) 40%

Total 100%

Students may augment their grades by adding one additional reading report (+5%) or by adding five sermon evaluations (+5%).

Achievement of Course objectives will be measured through the various assigned activities. The successful completion of these activities will require the student to spend approximately 135 hours devoted to the course work both in and out of class. The following chart is an estimation of how these hours are distributed across the course assignments. Grade will not be assigned according to time spent—however time spent may influence your grade both positively or negatively.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time</th>
<th>Students Actual Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15-30 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermons &amp; analysis</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
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Due Dates and Late Penalties No work will be accepted after the due date required.

Course Calendar

Saturday September 8, 2012

Work to be completed before first class
1. Before reading any textbook materials answer the following Questions
   a. What is preaching? Write your own definition
   b. Who is your favorite preacher? Why?
c. How would you describe people’s opinions of preaching?

d. What do you hope to gain from this class?

e. Read Gordon, David T. *Why Johnny Can’t Preach: The Media have shaped the Messengers.*
   
i. Do you agree with Gordon’s assessment that there is very little good preaching to be heard in today’s churches? Why?
   
ii. Do you agree that a preacher must be a reader or texts? Why?
   
iii. Do you agree that good writing makes good preaching? Why? Why might the opposite be true?
   
iv. Do you agree with Gordon’s reasons for the lack of good preaching in today’s churches? Why?
   
v. Write a definition of preaching
   
vi. What do you hope to gain from this class after reading Gordon?

f. Listen to one sermon by your favorite preacher. Judge the sermon on the basis of Dabney’s seven requisites listed by Gordon (pp. 24-28). Write out your assessment of this sermon.

2. Read as much as possible in Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*

   
a. Contrast Stott to Gordon. Whose arguments are more convincing?
   
b. What do you think can be done to overcome our audiences’ resistance to preaching or their inability to “hear” preaching?

4. Reading before Class Robinson, pp 17-113. Answer Questions on pages 47-50, and 97-100

- Introduction to each other and the course
  
  o What is expository preaching?
  
  o What is biblical preaching?
  
  o Is preaching relevant today?
  

- Introduction to the process of building a sermon.
  
  o What’s the Big Idea
  
  o The essentials of an effective sermon
  
  o What am I to preach?
  
  o What is the Exegetical Idea?
  
  o What is the Homiletical Idea?
  
  o Introducing
    
    ▪ The shapes can sermons take
    
    ▪ Using Illustrations
    
    ▪ Start with a bang
    
    ▪ When you end, end.
    
    ▪ Delivery Dynamics
Before next class:
Prepare Explanation Exercise
Listen to 3 recorded sermons and bring evaluations
Read Robinson pp. 115-245

Saturday, September 22, 2012

- Exegesis and Homiletics Workshop (PR 500 Students will have read all of Sproul, Knowing Scripture or Parts 1-3 of Kaiser and Silva, Introduction to hermeneutics before class.
- Lecture Materials
  - The shapes can sermons take
  - Using Illustrations
  - Application: “The exegetical process doesn’t end with understanding, it ends with application.” Paul Tripp
  - Introductions: Start with a bang
  - Conclusions: When you end, end all over.

Before next class:
Read Martin, Preaching in the Holy Spirit
Listen to remaining sermons and bring evaluations
Complete All of Robinson if you have not done so
Complete Stott or Lloyd-Jones

Saturday, October 13, 2012

- Delivery Dynamics: Voice and Body
- Boldness and Courage in Preaching
- The Holy Spirit in Preaching
- Preaching as Spiritual Warfare
- Explanation Exercise

Saturday, October 27, 2012

- Fifteen minute Sermons
  - Your Sermon Will be Judged on the Following:
    - Content:
      - Is the sermon clear? Is it well organized? Does it flow easily? Does the audience understand you?
      - Does the sermon have effective content? Is it based on sound exegesis? Does it have good supporting material and relevant illustrations?
- **Delivery:**
  - Does your delivery sound as though you really want to communicate? Does your voice have variety? Are you enthusiastic?
  - Does your body support what you are saying? Do you have eye contact that is direct and personal? Do you use gestures?
  - Do you want to be heard? Do you demonstrate conviction and sincerity?

Saturday November 3, 2012

- Fifteen minute Sermons
- Course Evaluations
- Final Materials
Course Work Personal Report

Preaching: Principles and Practice PR 601
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Boston Campus
Fall 2012
Dr. Matthew L. Burt

Name: ____________________________
Mailing Address

1. Did you attend all Classes? Y N
   a. If no, how many did you miss?

2. Did you complete the required Reading?
   a. The Acts of the Apostles Y / N
   b. Gordon, David T. Why Johnny Can’t Preach,
      Pages read _________
   c. Martin, Albert, N. Preaching in the Holy Spirit,
      Pages read _________
   d. Piper, John, Supremacy of God in Preaching
      Pages read _________
   e. Robinson, Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching
      Pages read _________
   f. Stott, Between Two Worlds.
      Pages read _________
   g. Lloyd-Jones, Preachers and Preaching
      Pages read _________

3. Reflection papers
   a. Stott Y / N
   b. Gordon Y / N
   c. Piper Y / N
   d. Martin Y / N
4. Sermon Evaluations  Y / N
5. Explanation Exercise  Y / N
6. Fifteen minute Sermon  Y / N

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EXPLANATION EXERCISE
The explanation exercise is not a sermon. It is simply an exercise that focuses on the explanation of something in a passage. There are several different things you might explain.

1. You might explain the meaning of a term in a passage. For example, you might explain what the reference to the high priest is in the book of Hebrews refers to and why it is significant.

2. You might explain the significance of some incident or action in a passage. For example, why did David pour out the water that three of his mighty men risked their lives to obtain for him.

3. You might explain how a passage in the Bible relates to context. For example, how II Samuel 11:1 relates to the previous chapters and to the incident that follows it.

4. You might explain how a familiar passage of Scripture is sometimes misapplied. For example, Psalm 11:3 is sometimes used in a sermon to urge the congregation to guard the foundations of the faith or of a nation.

5. You are not limited to any of these. Simply take something that may not be clear and explain it so that it is clear.

6. This is not a mini-sermon. In your introduction you will want to tell us what you are going to explain and why it is important. Then give us the explanation. Any illustration you use will further the explanation.

7. A significant skill in expository preaching is to explain the biblical text or parts of the text clearly. The purpose of this experience is to help you to develop that ability.

Format for Sermons/Explanation Exercises
1. Place your name and address either on a cover sheet or at the top of the first page.

2. Text: This is the biblical passage from which you are basing your explanation

3. Subject: What are you talking about? Don’t forget to use an interrogative who, what, why, when, where, which, how.

4. Complement: What are you saying about what he is talking about? Exegetical Idea: Subject + Complement = Main Idea

5. Purpose: Why are you doing this exercise? (Besides the fact I have
assigned it). A purpose is specific and measurable. Obviously your purpose is to explain a term, describe a flow of thought, show the importance of the context, etc.

6. What follows is your outline. Remember to write your outline in full sentences. Put transitions into parentheses. Outlines should have a complete introduction, conclusion, and transition written out in full. A clear outline will be clear to your listeners and to you. Your introduction will point up what the audience might not know and why it’s important to know it. Your conclusion will summarize the explanation in two or three sentences.

Common Problems with Explanation Exercise Outlines

1. The move/point statements are not full, complete sentences. Make sure that all of the sentences in the outlines are full, complete sentences and not sentence fragments, phrases, or questions. Questions are for transitions, not for idea statements.

2. The Explanation idea is not developed clearly. Remember, S + C = Idea. Sometimes the idea’s development is not clear. Move/point statements are to build toward the development and clarity of the central idea of the Explanation Exercise.

3. The Explanation idea is not clearly stated and/or restated. Stating and restating the idea at least three times will help your listeners get it! At the end of the Exercise you will want your listeners to be able to state clearly the result of your explanations.

4. The Explanation Exercise becomes a mini-sermon Remember, the emphasis of this exercise is to deal primarily with the first Functional Question: “What does this mean?” You don’t have to apply it, but you do have to explain something. You can use illustrations to help explain the idea or the steps toward explaining it.

Explanation Exercise/Some Things to Remember

1. State what you are going to explain and why you need to explain it.

2. Be clear. That is, err on the side of being too clear.

3. Before reading the passage, give reasons for the reading. Give your listeners the reason why you are looking at this passage. What don’t they know?
4. Use the Greek or Hebrew word only when there is no other way to get the meaning across.

5. Ask yourself, “What words, concepts, context, thoughts, or development needs to be explained to my listeners?” The question is, “What does this mean? Does this concept or part of it need to be explained?”

6. Is the author of Scripture explaining an idea?

7. Is this what my audience needs? Are there elements in the passage that the biblical writer takes for granted that my audience may need to know?

8. Put your explanation exercise together with the understanding that you are not necessarily talking to seminarians, but to average men and women who are in your church.

9. Can you use illustrations? Yes! Illustrations can help to explain.

10. You will have six to ten minutes for the exercise. Be clear. Be creative. Enjoy! It’s not nearly as difficult as it seems.

A PERSONAL NOTE: My goal in this course is to do everything I can to help you become an effective communicator of God’s Word. I don’t want the course to be an excessive burden to you and I have done my best to keep the requirements reasonable. Help me to help you by doing the assignments when they are due and do them with some thought and reasonable care.

Other Matters

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated
guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work,” as noted on the seminary’s *Academic Calendar*, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.
However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the 9“last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

**Returned Work**
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage- paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be given to the librarian of the Boston Campus for student pick up according to Gordon-Conwell policy.

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**
To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content, students are asked to refrain from audio and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings. In the event of an
absence special permission be requested for recording a specific set of lectures.

INTERNET USAGE
Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.